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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/492,761	01/27/2000	Teiichirou Chiba	VX992060	1341

7590 01/02/2003

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EXAMINER

CHU, CHRIS C

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2815

DATE MAILED: 01/02/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/492,761

Applicant(s)

CHIBA ET AL.

Examiner

Chris C. Chu

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The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 September 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 - 13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 - 13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☒ The proposed drawing correction filed on 13 December 2001 is: a) ☒ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Applicant's amendment filed on September 20, 2002 has been received and entered in the case.

Claim Objections

2. Claims 2 and 11 are objected to because of the following informalities:

In claim 2, line 4, "the dot mark" should be --the dot marks--.

In claim 11, line 2, "the alphanumeric characters" should be --a single font of the alphanumeric characters-- because multiple alphanumeric characters cannot be formed by 5 X 9 dot marks (see SEMI standards).

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1 and 8 ~ 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwai in view of Taravade.

Regarding claim 1, Iwai discloses in Fig. 7 and abstract, line 3 a semiconductor wafer (110) having an outer peripheral face containing a notch (at the place of 111b), an inner wall face of the notch containing markings (111b), and the markings being made from dot marks. Further, terms such as “inner”, “outer” and “external” wall faces are merely relative terms, which do not patternably distinguish claimed structure from Iwai in view of Taravade. Furthermore, the phrase “an inner wall face of the notch containing markings with history information concerning fabrication steps used to fabricate the semiconductor wafer, which markings can be read after fabrication of the semiconductor wafer is completed” is intended use language which does not differentiate claimed apparatus from Iwai.

Iwai does not disclose the maximum length of the dot marks to be 1 ~ 13 μm . However, Taravade teaches in column 4, lines 8 ~ 13 a maximum length of dot marks to be 10 μm . Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time when the invention was made to modify Iwai by using the maximum length of the dot marks to be 10 μm as taught by Taravade. The ordinary artisan would have been motivated to modify Iwai in the manner described above for at least the purpose of reducing time to form the marking on the wafer.

Regarding claim 8, as to the language on line 2, “the dot marks being formed by irradiating a laser beam”, even though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based upon the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though

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the prior product is made by a different process. In re Thorpe, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985) (citations omitted). A “product by process” claim is directed to the product per se, no matter how actually made, In re Hirao, **190 USPQ 15 at 17** (footnote 3). See also In re Brown, **173 USPQ 685**; In re Luck, **177 USPQ 523**; In re Fessmann, **180 USPQ 324**; In re Avery, **186 USPQ 116**; In re Wertheim, **191 USPQ 90** (**209 USPQ 254** does not deal with this issue); and In re Marosi et al., **218 USPQ 289** final product per se which must be determined in a “product by, all of” claim, and not the patentability of the process, and that an old or obvious product, whether claimed in “product by process” claims or not. Note that Applicant has the burden of proof in such cases, as the above caselaw makes clear.

Regarding claim 9, Taravade discloses in column 4, lines 8 ~ 13 the dot marks having a height in 0.1 μm .

Regarding claim 10, Iwai discloses in Fig. 11 the markings including alphanumeric characters.

Regarding claim 11, Iwai discloses the alphanumeric characters being arranged in a pattern of 5 dot marks by 9 dot marks since using 5 X 9 dot marks to form a single font of alphanumeric characters is SEMI standards.

Regarding claim 12, Iwai discloses the markings being arranged on the inner surface of the notch (see rejection of claim 1). Further, the phrase “the markings being arranged on the inner surface of the notch prior to fabrication steps of a slicing step, and before mirror face fabrication step and chemical polishing step” is product-by-process language, even though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based upon the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on

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its method of production. If the product in product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product is made by a different process. In re Thorpe, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985) (citations omitted). A “product by process” claim is directed to the product per se, no matter how actually made, In re Hirao, 190 USPQ 15 at 17 (footnote 3). See also In re Brown, 173 USPQ 685; In re Luck, 177 USPQ 523; In re Fessmann, 180 USPQ 324; In re Avery, 186 USPQ 116; In re Wertheim, 191 USPQ 90 (209 USPQ 254 does not deal with this issue); and In re Marosi et al., 218 USPQ 289 final product per se which must be determined in a “product by, all of” claim, and not the patentability of the process, and that an old or obvious product, whether claimed in “product by process” claims or not. Note that Applicant has the burden of proof in such cases, as the above caselaw makes clear.

Regarding claim 13, the phrase “the markings contain all the history information concerning fabrication steps for fabricating the semiconductor wafer” is intended use language which does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from Iwai in view of Taravade.

5. Claims 2 ~ 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwai and Taravade as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Oishi et al.

Regarding claim 2, Iwai, as modified, discloses the claimed invention except for upper and lower edge line portions of the inner wall face of the notch are respectively chamfered to thereby constitute upper and lower inclined faces and the dot mark is formed on the inclined faces. However, Oishi et al. teaches in Fig. 1b an upper and lower inclined faces (3) and the dot mark being formed on the inclined faces (4). Thus, it would have been obvious to one of

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ordinary skill in the art at the time when the invention was made to further modify Iwai by using the upper and lower inclined faces and the dot mark on the inclined faces as taught by Oishi et al. The ordinary artisan would have been motivated to further modify Iwai in the manner described above for at least the purpose of reducing residual work stress or thermal stress on a wafer (column 1, lines 45 ~ 48). Further, as to the language on lines 1 ~ 3, “upper and lower edge line portions of the inner wall face of the notch are respectively chamfered to thereby constitute upper and lower inclined faces”, even though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based upon the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product is made by a different process. In re Thorpe, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985) (citations omitted). A “product by process” claim is directed to the product per se, no matter how actually made, In re Hirao, **190 USPQ 15 at 17** (footnote 3). See also In re Brown, **173 USPQ 685**; In re Luck, **177 USPQ 523**; In re Fessmann, **180 USPQ 324**; In re Avery, **186 USPQ 116**; In re Wertheim, **191 USPQ 90** (**209 USPQ 254** does not deal with this issue); and In re Marosi et al., **218 USPQ 289** final product per se which must be determined in a “product by, all of” claim, and not the patentability of the process, and that an old or obvious product, whether claimed in “product by process” claims or not. Note that Applicant has the burden of proof in such cases, as the above caselaw makes clear.

Regarding claims 3 and 6, since Iwai, as modified, does not limit the angle of an inclination of at least one inclined face to any particular or specific degree, the reference discloses encompasses all well known an angle of an inclination of at least one inclined face

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relative to the surface of the semiconductor wafer including "equal to or smaller than 30 degree"
(see Fig. 1b of Oishi et al.).

Regarding claims 4 and 7, Oishi et al. discloses in column 2, lines 9 ~ 14 a surface roughness of at least one inclined face being equal to or smaller than 1 μm .

Regarding claim 5, Iwai, as modified, teaches the dot marks being formed on either one of the upper and lower inclined faces (see Fig. 1b of Oishi et al.).

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 5, 8 and 9 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Chris C. Chu whose telephone number is (703) 305-6194. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (10:30 - 7:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eddie C. Lee can be reached on (703) 308-1690. The fax phone numbers for the

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organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 308-7382 for regular communications and (703) 308-7722 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

Chris C. Chu
Examiner
Art Unit 2815

c.c.
December 30, 2002



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